The grammatical status of meronyms in Seri

Meronyms, or part names, tend to be expressed as nouns in Seri. This, in and of itself is not a surprising fact, however, given the fact that Seri speakers do not seem to employ systematic analogical mapping to name parts of inanimate objects (O'Meara in press), there appears to be variation as to the type of nouns that are utilized to refer to object parts. More specifically, Seri speakers use relational nouns that are obligatorily possessed as in *yeen* 'its face' in (1), as well as deverbal nominalized forms or complex expressions that contain a nominalization in order to make reference to object parts as in *cöiyazaj* 'where it has a ride' in (2).

(1) *Ziix   hax   c-oiij   oo   **hant**   **c-patj***
     thing   very   SBJ.NMLZ-tubular   PART   land   SBJ.NMLZ-flat
     com   ***y-een***   ***i-icp**…*
     DEF.ART.SG.lying   3POSS-face   3POSS-side
     'In front of (lit. on its face side) the tubular thing where it is flat...'
     (AIM Chunches 2_obj5)

(2) ***Cöiyazaj***   *xahxaii   tintica*   *i-ti*
     OBL.NMLZ.have.ridge   like   DEF.ART.SG.go.away   3POSS-in
     y-iij   xo…   cöiyazaj   *ha   tintica*
     DP-sit   but   OBL.NMLZ.have.ridge   ?   DEF.ART.SG.go.away
     i-m-haa
     SBJ.NMLZ-NEG-be
     'It is on the thing that is like a ridge, but... it's not the curvy part.' (AIM Chunches1_obj3)

This flexibility with respect to the grammatical class of meronyms in Seri might be linked to the above mentioned fact that Seri lacks systematic mapping between body parts and object parts. It is also consistent with the fact that the object part terms in Seri can describe either form or function of the object part. For instance, the above examples illustrate part names that make reference to the form of the part. One the other hand, the steering wheel of a car is called *ziix hapepjc* which literally means 'thing that is grabbed' where *hapepjc* is an oblique nominalization of the passive form of the verb *-ipjc* 'grab'.

This work provides an overview of the grammatical aspects of Seri meronyms as well as some aspects of the referential properties of these nominal expressions. The data come from both elicitation tools used by the Spatial Language and Cognition in Mesoamerica project, as well as general data collected by the author.